



For Immediate Release  
October 8, 2007  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

## ***Nasiriyah Maternity and Pediatric Hospital rehabilitation project nearly finished***

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[Arabic Version](#)

**NASIRIYAH, Iraq**— Work is nearly finished on a project to renovate the Nasiriyah Maternity and Pediatric Hospital, a facility whose re-opening has been eagerly anticipated by expectant mothers, medical professionals and many others in Dhi Qar Province in Southern Iraq.

John Overfield, a resident engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said the hospital should be ready to be turned over to Iraqi authorities in a few weeks. Navy Cmdr. Michael Lang, officer in charge of Corps' Adder Area Office, is pushing for a turnover by Oct. 16. "I want to get this turned over," he said.

Lang credited Overfield with some "pretty heroic efforts" to jump-start the once-languishing project and to encourage the Iraqi contractor and the Corps' Iraqi construction engineers to team up and get the project into gear and to meet specifications and timetables. Overfield helped the contractor surmount many hurdles, Lang said.

Overfield said he had lengthy conversation with the contractor and sought at all times to deal with him with respect and as a professional. During a recent visit to the job site, Overfield politely peppered the contractor with questions about tasks remaining to be accomplished before the turnover can be made.

The largest maternity hospital in Dhi Qar Province, the renovated facility will have 285 beds and a capacity to handle 40 deliveries a day or 1,200 a month, ac-



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and construction contractor personnel inspect remaining roofing work to be completed on renovation of the Nasiriyah Maternity and Pediatric Hospital. (USACE photo by Robin Parks)

ording to information provided by the Ministry of Health for Dhi Qar Province, which said the renovated hospital will host all the pediatricians and obstetricians in the province.

"Key Government of Iraq officials are working hard to improve services and recently noted that 2008 would be the Year of Services for the people," said Col. Steve Hill, commander of the Gulf Region South district of the Corps of Engineers. "This project will provide much needed services and is a success for the region around Nasiriyah."

"It's a beautiful facility," said Lang, the officer in charge of the Adder Area Office. "And it will do a lot of good once it's open again."

Renovations include upgrades to 1970-vintage technology of electrical and mechanical systems; roof repairs; sanitary upgrades; and the replacement of four elevators, with two extended to the third floor. The project also entailed provision of an advanced technological oxygen generator; fire alarm system; public address system; nurse call system; and emergency lighting and telephone systems.

The hospital has been closed for about three years, according to Robin Parks, a health sector project manager for the Corps of Engineers. That's why people are so anxious for it to get up and running again, she said.

Renovation of the maternity hospital began in the fall of 2004. The initial \$9.2 million contract was terminated about a year and a half later. At that point, Parks said, renovations were 58 percent complete. Mitch Peterson, a program analyst, said \$5.3 million was paid out under the first contract. Work continued under a bridge contract until a new contract was awarded in May 2006. The current contract is for \$1.9 million, according to Overfield, the resident engineer.

While the maternity hospital was closed, another local hospital provided 15 beds for the maternity ward, said Lang. But this fell far short of being able to handle the case load and many patients had



Resident Engineer John Overfield looks at a new transformer yet to be installed as the contractor finishes work on the Nasiriyah Maternity and Pediatric Hospital. John Connor, public affairs officer, videotapes the site visit. (USACE photo by Navy Cmdr. Michael Lang)

to sleep on the floor, he said, adding that unclean conditions contribute to a high infant mortality rate in the area.

The hope and expectation among people involved with the renovation project is that having a modern maternity and pediatric hospital open to serve the people of the Nasiriyah area will cause this situation to improve.

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